REMARKS

The present application is being filed concurrently with a Request for Continued Examination.

In the Official Action dated October 6, 2003, Claims 16 to 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. Claims 16 to 20 further were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,272,787 (Michael) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,162,914 (Takahashi). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections respectfully are requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

The formal rejection of the claims, and the rejection of the claims over the cited art respectfully are traversed. Nevertheless, without conceding the propriety of the rejections, Claims 16 and 20 have been amended. Support for the amendments may be found in the original disclosure. No new matter has been added.

The present invention relates to a novel image pickup method and apparatus. In one aspect, as recited in independent Claim 16, the present invention relates to an image pickup apparatus comprising an image sensor that picks up an image corresponding to an optical image, and produces a first field image signal and a second field image signal different from the first field image signal. A synthesizing circuit synthesizes the first field image signal and the second field image signal to form a synthesized image signal. A detecting circuit detects an amount of motion vector and produces a detection signal in comparison with a predetermined threshold level, and a control circuit selects a non-synthesizing mode or a synthesizing mode of operation in response to the detection signal from the detecting circuit. Thus, in this aspect, the synthesizing circuit synthesizes the first and second field image signals in one of: (1) a (first) non-synthesizing mode, and (2) a (second) synthesizing mode, in which a synthesized image signal is produced by synthesizing the first field image signal and the second field image signal.

Applicant submits that the prior art fails to anticipate the present invention. Moreover, Applicant submits that there are differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art, such that the subject matter taken as a whole would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made.

The Michael '787 patent relates to a TV picture freeze system, and discloses a system capable of capturing a video frame comprising first and second fields. However, the Michael '787 patent fails to disclose or suggest the combination of features of a synthesizing circuit, a detecting circuit and a control circuit, in which the synthesizing circuit synthesizes a first field image signal and a second field image signal to form a synthesized image signal, and the control circuit selects a non-synthesizing mode or a synthesizing mode of operation in response to a detection signal from the detection means, as disclosed and claimed in the present application. Rather, Applicant submits the Michael '787 patent merely discloses, e.g., in Figures 2 and 5, and the corresponding text at column 3, lines 57 and column 4 line 68 to column 5, line 6, to produce one frame image signal using two field image signals.

The Takahashi '914 patent relates to an image sensing device with diverse storage fumes used in picture composition, and discloses an image sensing device adapted to compose an appropriate single picture from a plurality of pictures of different exposures obtained from the same subject, wherein the camera operation is controlled using as a reference one of the plurality of pictures of different exposures. However, as acknowledged in the Official Action, the Takahashi '914 patent fails to disclose or suggest the feature of detecting a motion vector, and moreover further fails to teach or suggest the feature of controlling image synthesization in accordance with a detected motion vector, as disclosed and claimed in the present application. Although the Takahashi '914 patent is alleged to teach producing one field image signal by selecting part of a first field image signal and a part of a second field image signal, nowhere is the Takahashi '914 patent

understood to disclose or suggest the feature of a synthesizing circuit that synthesizes a first field image signal and second field image signal in a synthesizing mode, as disclosed and claimed in the present application. Accordingly, the Takahashi '914 patent is not understood to remedy the deficiencies of the Michael '787 patent. Nor is the Takahashi '914 patent understood to add anything to the Michael '787 patent that would make obvious the claimed invention.

For the above reasons, Applicant submits that independent Claim 16 is allowable over the cited art.

Claims 17 to 20 depend from Claim 16 and are believed allowable for the same reasons. Moreover, each of these dependent claims recites additional features in combination with the features of its respective base claim, and is believed allowable in its own right. Individual consideration of the dependent claims respectfully is requested.

Applicant believes that the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Official Action, and submits that the application is in allowable form. Favorable consideration of the claims and passage to issue of the present application at the Examiner's earliest convenience earnestly are solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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